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Commentary — From the Margins
This Gospel Into All the World

All biblical commentators recognize one sign: “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14 NRSV used throughout). When the gospel of Christ is preached to the world, the end of the age will be upon humanity. But does this passage really say what it is purported to say? Is the preaching of the gospel of Christ the sign of the end? One energized voice on radio thirty, forty, fifty years ago claimed that the gospel that must be proclaimed wasn’t a gospel about Christ, but the good news of the soon coming kingdom of God; that the gospel that must be proclaimed was the gospel Christ proclaimed. This voice that could be heard all night long as I drove across the continent in my youth insisted that the gospel of Christ hadn’t been proclaimed for 1900 years, a claim for which he was vigorously ridiculed. Christian leaders of all persuasions demanded to know what message had been taken to the world for these nineteen centuries if not the gospel of Christ. Yet, the *prima facie* evidence validating the correctness of this energized voice’s claim was the objection made to the claim: if the gospel to have been preached was the gospel of Christ, then the end would have come long ago. So the message that must be taken to the world for the end to come necessarily differs from the gospel of Christ as delivered through the middle of the 20th-Century if Jesus’ words are reliable.

Today, the charismatic gospel of Protestant Christianity is beamed from satellites into Catholic or Orthodox lands. At the same time, young missionaries bring another testament of Christ to these same nations. Converts from one form of Christianity to another are being made, as missionaries baptize the children of former missionaries. The far corners of the world have been reached, yet the end of the age hasn’t come. So perhaps the gospels being preached and the gospels that have been preached are not the ones required. Perhaps that energized voice of a generation ago was onto something.

Using close reading skills, the direct referent for *this good news of the kingdom* is contained in the preceding sentence: “But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt 24:13). So the *good news of the kingdom* is that the one who endures to the end will be saved. This, however, is not the gospel of the charismatic church. Their gospel is that the church will be raptured and will escape being handed over to be tortured, killed, and hated by all nations because of Jesus’ name (verse 9); will escape seeing many false prophets arise (verse 11); will escape the increase in lawlessness, and the love of many growing cold (verse 12). So the gospel of the charismatic church is decidedly not the gospel that will bring about the end of the age.

The gospel contained in another testament of Jesus Christ doesn’t promise escapism to heaven instead of salvation coming by enduring to the end; rather, it is a gospel that comes from another prophet. According to those who follow this prophet, the test of this gospel is reading it and seeing if in your heart you don’t know that it’s correct. The prophet Jeremiah, though, says the heart is deceitful above all things, so an emotional judgment is never a valid judgment. The only criteria for whether a prophet is genuine is found in Deuteronomy 13: “If prophets or those who divine by dreams appear among you and promise you omens or portents, and the omens or the portents declared by them take place, and they say, ‘Let us follow other gods’ (whom you have not known) ‘and let us serve them,’ you must not heed the words of those prophets” (verses 1–3). So the

Scriptural test of a prophet isn't whether a prophecy or a dream is true, but whether the prophet teaches Israel to follow other gods. *YHWH* told Moses to tell the Israelites, "You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you" (Exod 31:13). So the sign of *YHWH*, Israel's Elohim, is the Sabbaths that commemorate "that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (verse 17). *YHWH* is then born as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-2); and this same Jesus said that disciples were not to break even the least of the commandments of the law (Matt 5:17-19). Therefore, keeping the seventh day Sabbath becomes the test of whether a disciple or a prophet worships other gods besides the Son of Man and His God and Father (John 20:17). If a prophet teaches Israel to worship on any days other than the Sabbaths of its God, the prophet is false, regardless of the truth of the prophet's utterances. So the gospel of this other testament of Jesus is a false gospel.

Apparently the gospel that the person who endures to the end will be saved hasn't been preached to the world, meaning that a work remains to be done. A great work. A worldwide work. This gospel isn't that Christ will return to reign as king of kings for a thousand years, nor is this gospel the message about who Christ was and what He did as a man. Rather, this gospel is a consoling message that despite everything that will happen to spiritual Israelites and to Gentiles prior to their liberation from spiritual slavery and after, the person who endures to the end (a person cannot accept the mark of the beast and endure) will be saved, will have a part in the first resurrection. Salvation will be available to everyone who endures. All who endure will be glorified.

Spiritual Israel will be liberated from bondage to sin at a future second Passover, when all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb will be slain. Then halfway through seven years of Tribulation, the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15). Satan is cast from heaven, and comes to Earth as a roaring lion seeking to devour whomever he can because he knows his time is short. But he comes as the antiChrist. He comes deceiving whom he can, for if he deceives the person, he has devoured the person. Once a person, liberated by the Father and called out of Babylon by Christ (Rev 18:4), accepts Satan's slave mark, the person has made him or herself an enemy of the Father. The person will not have a part in the first resurrection, for the person didn't endure in faith. And endurance in faith is required for glorification.

That energized voice of a generation ago was correct: the gospel that would bring about the end of the age hadn't been proclaimed for 1900 years. Actually, it never was previously proclaimed, for endtime prophecies were sealed and secret until the time of the end. Only now can they be understood. Only now can this gospel be proclaimed. Only now can this gospel be taken to the world. Only now can the end of the age come.

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